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Insufficiently motivated employees: the influence of gender, age, and organization type on frustration, conflict with employers, and complexity of conflict

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Abstract

This research focuses on employees who are not sufficiently motivated. It focuses on how gender, age, and organization type affect frustration of insufficiently motivated employees, their tendency to conflict with their employers, and the complexity of the conflict. A questionnaire was distributed to accessible employees in different private and public organizations in Saudi Arabia. The number of participants is 211. The data analysis that was performed included independent samples T-Test, and linear regression test. The analysis reveals that there are no differences between females and males regarding frustration and conflicts with employers. However, conflicts that involve females are more complicated than those that involve males. The organization type does not have any significant impact on frustration, the conflict with the employer, or on the complexity of the conflict. Finally, the analysis shows that there is a positive significant relationship between age and frustration, and between age and the complexity of the conflict. The findings of this research add significant implications to the literature.

Keywords: Frustration, Conflict, Motivation, Organizations, Complicated conflict, Intrinsic motivation, Extrinsic motivation, Saudi Arabia

Introduction

Many organizations put great effort into recruitment in order to hire qualified and talented applicants. Furthermore, some employ other organizations specializing in recruitment in order to benefit from their

experiences in this field. The competition between organizations in recruiting qualified individuals has been increasing due to globalization. Local organizations, for example, experience competitive recruiting in their countries due to international companies located there.

Hiring qualified and talented employees would not be enough. Employees need to be enough motivated and encouraged. Indeed, employees have the ability to work and be creative. However, it is important to know what needs to be done in order to encourage them to act in that manner. Motivation is a continuous process, and employees should always be motivated. By providing incentives, employees work harder in order to improve their skills and benefit from the provided incentives.

On the other hand, absence of incentives has negative impacts on employees. Shukla (2012) explains that behaviors and performances of employees are driven by incentives provided by employers. The matter extends beyond the impact on performance. The literature explains that employees, who are not motivated adequately, would be frustrated and tend to conflict with their employers. This influences organizations in the short and long terms. Thus, it is important to understand the nature of frustration and conflict by identifying their relationships with such essential variables as gender, organization type, and age.

Literature

Motivating employees inspires them to work in a way that achieves the goals of the organization (Rudani, 2013). It is also critical to ensure the continuity of the motivation process and consider the individual differences among employees. Motivations could be intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic refers to the internal motivations that come from the employees themselves (e.g., feeling responsible and enjoying working) while extrinsic refers to the motivations that are caused by the incentives that are awarded to employees by organizations (e.g., money and rewards) (Armstrong, 2002; Deci and Gagné, 2004). Both types are critical. When an active employee who has a desire to work and accomplish duties effectively (intrinsic motivation) is not receiving the rewards he expects from his organization (extrinsic motivation), his enthusiasm would decrease over time. He may think, for example, that his employer does not appreciate hard-working employees. Thus, organizations should consider the importance of both types of motivation.

Human resource managers need to pay attention to the significance

of incentives. Nagendra and Manjunath (2008) explain that motivation is important for satisfaction. Singla (2009) also explains that the advantages of incentives include increased commitment and an increased ability to accept changes in the organization. The first advantage is very important, especially in the current time, where employees can both domestically and internationally transfer from one organization to another. Regarding the second advantage, organizations have a desperate need for employees who accept changes. The external environment of an organization is dynamic (Antonacopoulou & Chiva, 2007), and this necessitates organizations to make changes in accordance with the changes in the external environment. When employees accept and live with changes, they are able to form and accomplish goals better.

The existence or absence of incentives has a direct and strong impact on the behavior of employees because they are related to their basic needs. Conrad, Ghosh, & Isaacson (2015) conducted a study about how physicians are motivated in the workplace. They found that physicians are concerned with job security and an interesting workplace, and physicians' leaders believe in these incentives as well. Maslow (1943) explains in his needs theory that the behaviors of human beings are driven by their needs (as cited in Hunt, 2015). Individuals naturally seek the necessities of life, security, being loved by others, and being respected by society. Employees need to feel safe in their jobs, and every employee is concerned about losing his job. For an interesting workplace, employees prefer to work in a peaceful environment that assists in strengthening their relationships with their colleagues.

Another study by Park and Kruse (2014) showed how incentives drive individuals' behaviors. They found that there is a correlation between the incentives and financial performance of an organization and this relationship is affected by organizational commitment and innovation. This is interpreted by Vroom's expectancy theory, which confirms that the behaviors pursued by individuals depend on the attractiveness of the outcomes and the awarded incentives of adopting such behaviors (as cited in Gorman, 2004). Theories by Skinner and Thorndike also argue that the behaviors of individuals are influenced by external effects, including the rewards and punishments they receive for adopting such behaviors (Jones & Page, 1987). Accordingly, employees work hard when they expect to receive incentives. Motivation also relates to an organizational system as a whole rather than employees only. Lo (2002) studied the adoption of a quality management system by

construction contracting companies in Hong Kong. He found that contractors would achieve and adopt a real quality management system due to their own motivations rather than governmental laws.

In case of absence of incentives, frustration is generated among employees. In case of absence of job security, compensation, interesting work environment; complaining and boredom among employees may rise. Katz and Lawyer (1985) explain that behaviors of people are mostly influenced by their needs. Sanderson (2010) states that frustration is generated when a person is prevented from obtaining his goals or meeting his needs. McKenna (2000) stresses that preventing individuals from reaching incentives and meeting their needs leads to frustration. Amabile (1993) confirms that satisfaction of employees depends on their obtained incentives. He adds that lack of incentives affects employees' commitment and effort. Islam and Ismail (2008) state that employees feel frustrated when there is a lack of incentives, which results in behaviors such as low performance.

Furthermore, the issue of lack of incentives provided by employers goes further than frustration. It extends into conflict where frustrated employees tend to conflict with their employers. Favaro (2006) mentions the behaviors of frustrated individuals may turn into anger. This is because a frustrated person feels uncomfortable, which leads to being aggressive. Frustration theory explains that aggressive behaviors occur due to the lack of needs being met and are an attempt to get rid of frustration (Braithwaite, 2001). Sanderson (2010) mentions that a frustrated person usually directs his anger toward the source of frustration, leading to conflict. Jeong (2000) confirms that people also tend to adopt aggressive behaviors and conflict when they are deprived of their needs.

The literature explains that frustration and conflict with employers are the consequences of the lack of external incentives. However, there is a need to deeply and comprehensively understand how gender, age, and organization type affect frustration, conflict with employer, and complexity of conflict among insufficiently motivated employees. Frustration is measured in this research from various core aspects: satisfaction, efficiency, resentment toward their employer, and organizational loyalty. All these aspects relate directly to the psychological aspect of employees, the relationships between employees and their organizations, and the performance of organizations as a whole. The complexity of conflict is measured in this research using the following aspects: how it affects the relationships between parties, the length of the

conflict, and how it affects the work process. Using quantitative techniques assists in a better understanding of the research topic and more valuable facts can be added to the literature.

There are some differences between males and females, old and young people, public and private organizations. Hence, it is expected that gender, age, and organization type might have some effects on frustration, the conflict with the employer, and on the complexity of the conflict. Males and females differ biologically and psychologically. Etaugh and Bridges (2013) explain that women are more emotional, sensitive, and anxious than men. Turniansky, Hare, and Gurion (1998) also explain that males and females perceive things in organizations differently. They view and approach conflicts in different ways. Brewer, Mitchell, & Weber (2002) state that males use dominating style in dealing with conflict in contrast to females who use avoiding style. Thomas, Thomas, & Schaubhut (2008) found in their study that males adopt competing styles more than women in all six levels in organizations, from staff to top executives. As for age, individuals' behaviors change over time certainly. Old people view and perceive things differently from young people; we notice that in our daily lives. In organizations, it is noted that age is a significant variable in many aspects of work. For example, Pahos and Galanaki (2019) found that age relates to performance and also moderated the relationship between performance and practices of employees.

Employees in the Saudi public sector usually have more job security than their counterparts in the Saudi private sector. In addition, incentives provided by the private sector and the public sector differ to some extent in terms of methods, strategies, and availability of incentives. Aljaithin (2013) stresses that the public sector is more secure than the private sector. He also adds that the incentives in the public sector are generally more than those in the private sector. Arishi (2015) confirms that Saudi youth are looking to work in the public sector searching for job security. Thus, employees in the public sector are supposed to have more confrontational courage with their employers than their counterparts in the private sector. These differences might make employees behave differently toward issues in the workplace.

Research Question:

What are the influences of gender, organization type, and age on frustration, conflict with the employer, and the complexity of the conflict among insufficiently motivated employees?

Hypotheses:

H1: There is a significant relationship between gender and frustration.

H2: There is a significant relationship between organization type and frustration.

H3: There is a significant relationship between age and frustration.

H4: There is a significant relationship between gender and the conflict with the employers.

H5: There is a significant relationship between organization type and the conflict with the employers.

H6: There is a significant relationship between age and the conflict with the employers.

H7: There is a significant relationship between gender and the complexity of the conflict.

H8: There is a significant relationship between organization type and the complexity of the conflict.

H9: There is a significant relationship between age and the complexity of the conflict.

Purpose of the study

This research has three main goals:

1. Identifying the role of individual differences in reactions of employees toward frustration.
2. Understanding organizational conflicts, related to the lack of incentives, better by identifying variables influencing courses and natures of these conflicts.
3. Raising awareness among managers by focusing on the consequences of the lack of incentives: frustration and conflict.

Methodology

Instrument

The data of this research was collected through a primary source (survey). The survey consists of three main parts that use 5-point Likert scales. The first part relates to the demographic questions (Q1, Q2, and Q3). Q4 identifies whether participants are motivated or not, since this research targets insufficiently motivated employees. Q4 is a logical question, since only those who answer yes and admit that they have not obtained sufficient incentives

are eligible to complete the survey. There are no other available ways for the researcher to identify insufficiently motivated employees, such as using a database, name lists, etc. Q5 determines the types of incentives of which participants are deprived. The second part measures frustration (Q6, Q7, Q8, and Q9). Q10 determines the frequency of occurring conflicts between participants and their employers. The third part measures the complexity of the conflict (Q 11, Q12, and Q13). The survey has been tested for reliability using the Cronbach's Alpha test. The results show that high consistency is found among the second part of the questions (0.830) and the third part of the questions (0.811). The overall value of Cronbach's Alpha was 0.845. The acceptable value of Cronbach's Alpha for social sciences is between 0.7 and 1.0 (Buunk & Van, 2013). Table 1 shows the values of the Cronbach's Alpha tests.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis using Cronbach's Alpha test for N=38

Measures	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
1 – Q6, Q7, Q8, and Q9	.830	4
2 – Q11, Q12, and Q13	.811	3
Overall	.845	7

Sample

The survey was distributed to accessible employees (through a convenience sample) in various private and public organizations in different regions of Saudi Arabia. It is beyond the ability of the researcher to obtain a random sample. There are no available databases that include the names of employees in the private or public sectors. Johnson and Christensen (2012) mention that researchers sometimes face difficulties that make obtaining random samples very difficult.

Bernard (2000) explains that using convenience samples in many studies are beneficial. Cooper and Schindler (2001) also state that a convenience sample is considered as dependable (as cited in Coldwell & Herbst, 2004). Kerlinger and Lee (2000) mention that researchers can use convenience samples as long as their studies are conducted logically and carefully (as

cited in Burns, Gray, & Grove, 2015). This research focuses on exploring the influence of essential demographic variables on frustration, conflict with the employer, and on the complexity of the conflict; thus, the sampling process in this type of study should not be very accurate, according to Monette, Sullivan, and DeJong, (2011). Furthermore, by examining the characteristics of the sample of this research (age, type of employer, gender, and types of incentives that are not obtained), it is found that the sample is diverse. There are no limitations regarding the demographic diversity, and that fact makes this sample reliable.

The percentage of males is 56%, while the percentage of females is 44% (Table 2). The percentages of participation from the private and the public organizations are 35 % and 65 %, respectively (Table 3). The ages of the participants range from 20 to 59 years (Table 4). For the non-obtained incentives, twenty nine percent (29%) of the participants said that they did not obtain financial incentives, twenty four percent of the participants (24%) said that they did not obtain nonfinancial incentives, and forty seven percent (47%) of the participants said that they did not obtain both financial and non-financial incentives (Table 5). The number of eligible participants (insufficiently motivated employees) is 211. Forty two of the participants have answered that they are motivated sufficiently; so, they were excluded.

Table 2 : Gender

Gender	Percentage
Male	56 %
Female	44%

Table 3: Employer

Organization type	Percentage
Private Organizations	35%
Public Organizations	65%

Table 4: Age

Interval	Number
20-25	13
26-30	41
31-35	53
36-40	51
41-45	30
46-50	19
51-55	1
56-60	3

Table 5: Type of incentives not obtained

Incentive Type	Percentage
Financial	29%
Nonfinancial	24%
Both financial and nonfinancial	47%

Results and Discussion

Gender:

Table 6: Independent sample T-Test: the relationship between gender and frustration

	gender	N	mean	SD	T	SIG.
Frustration.	Male	119	3.302	0.99035	1.797	0.181
	Female	92	3.429	1.06217		

The result shows that there is no significant relationship between gender and frustration as $p\text{-value} = 0.181$, is more than 0.05. Thus, the first hypothesis is rejected.

Table 7: Independent sample T-Test: the relationship between gender and conflict with the employers.

	gender	N	mean	SD	T	SIG.
conflict with the employers	Male	119	2.202	1.23219	3.850	0.051
	Female	92	2.217	1.38140		

There is no significant relationship between gender and conflict with the employers

because p-value = 0.051, is more than 0.05. So, the fourth hypothesis is rejected.

Table 8: Independent sample T-Test: the relationship between gender and the complexity of the conflict

	gender	N	Mean	SD	T	SIG.
Complexity of the conflict.	Male	119	2.0168	1.083	9.897	0.002
	Female	92	2.1594	1.33		

It is evident that there is a relationship between gender and complexity of the conflict because p-value = 0.002, is less than 0.05. Thus, the seventh hypothesis is accepted.

The level of frustration among female and male participants is more than average: the mean for females is 3.4 while the mean for males is 3.3. However, there are no significant statistical differences between them. Etaugh and Bridges (2013) explain that women are more emotional and anxious than men. In addition, women, by their nature, are more sensitive than men. However, it seems, based on the results of this research, that frustration is felt similarly to a large extent by both males and females. This could be interpreted by Maslow's Human Needs theory (1943), which explains that needs influence the behaviors and actions of human beings, whether males or females, as a whole (as cited in Hunt, 2015). As for conflicts, male and female participants have been involved in conflict with the employers even though that was below average: the mean for females is 2.2, and the mean for males is 2.2. However, there is no significant difference between them. This is due to the equal level of frustration among them. Regarding the complexity of the conflict, conflict is more complicated when it involves females compared to males, because there is a significant statistical difference between the two means: the mean for females is 2.15, and the mean for males is 2.01. Women, by their nature, are more peaceful than men. Furthermore, men are more

aggressive than women. However, it is found in this research that conflicts that involve females: affect the relationship with employers, affect the work process, and continue for a long time.

Organization type:

Table 9: independent sample T-Test: the relationship between organization type and frustration

	Type	N	mean	SD	T	SIG.
Frustration	Public	137	3.3577	1.06100	1.076	0.301
	Private	74	3.3581	0.952		

This table shows that there is no significant relationship between organization type and frustration, p-value = 0.301 is more than 0.05. So, the second hypothesis is rejected.

Table 10: independent sample T-Test: the relationship between organization type and conflict with employers.

	Type	N	mean	SD	T	SIG.
Conflict with employers	Public	137	2.2555	1.32858	0.860	0.355
	Private	74	2.1216	1.23812		

The result in this table shows that there is no relationship between organization type and conflict with the employers, p-value = 0.35 is more than 0.05. So, the fifth hypothesis is rejected.

Table 11: independent sample T-Test: the relationship between organization type and complexity of the conflict

	type	N	Mean	SD	T	SIG.
Complexity of the conflict	public	137	2.0998	1.19255	0.313	0.576
	private	74	2.0405	1.21251		

It is clear that there is no significant relationship between organization type and complexity of the conflict, p-value = 0.576 is more than 0.05. So, the eighth hypothesis is rejected.

The level of frustration among employees in the private and public sectors is more than average: the means for both the public and the private sectors are 3.35. Yet, there is no significant difference between them. As

for conflict, the mean value of tendency of employees to conflict with their employers in the public sector is 2.25 while it is 2.1 in the private sector. Employees in the public sector tend to conflict a little bit more than their counterparts in the private sector. However, the difference is not statistically significant. Furthermore, the complexity of conflict is not significantly related to organization type: the means for the public and the private sectors are 2.09 and 2.04, respectively. Employees in the public sector usually have more job security than their counterparts in the private sector (Arishi, 2015; Aljaithin, 2013). Hence, employees in the public sector are expected to conflict aggressively with their employers more than their counterparts in the private sector. However, the analysis shows that the organization does not significantly influence the complexity of the conflict.

Age:

Table 12: Linear Regression: the relationship between age and frustration

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	4.089	1	4.089	3.973	0.048
Residual	215.145	210	1.029		
Total	219.235	211			

The result in this table shows that there is a significant relationship between age and frustration, p-value = 0.048, is less than 0.05. So, the third hypothesis is accepted.

Table 13: Linear Regression: the relationship between age and conflict with the employers.

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	5.720	1	5.720	3.444	0.065
Residual	347.105	210	1.661		
Total	352.825	211			

This table demonstrates that there is no relationship between age and conflict with the employer, p-value = 0.065, is more than 0.05. So, the sixth hypothesis is rejected.

Table 14: Linear Regression: the relationship between age and complexity of the conflict

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	7.129	1	7.129	5.072	0.025
Residual	293.777	210	1.406		
Total	300.906	211			

It is evident that there is a relationship between age and complexity of conflict, $p\text{-value} = 0.025$, is less than 0.05. So, the ninth hypothesis is accepted.

The analysis shows that there is a positive significant relationship between age and frustration, and between age and complexity of the conflict. However, there is no significant relationship between age and conflict with the employers. This is actually interpreted that younger employees are more enthusiastic in their work than other employees, and they may focus on achievements more than incentives. On the other hand, older employees have spent many years working in their organizations; therefore, their requirements increase. They expect to be rewarded and motivated more by their employers; therefore, they feel more frustrated compared with younger employees. Maslow explains that when individuals obtain certain needs (e.g., physiological needs), they look forward to other needs until they reach the top of the pyramid of needs (esteem and self-actualization) (as cited in Hunt, 2015). Because of that, conflicts with employers resulting from frustration get complicated when involving old employees compared with young employees. These conflicts take time, affect the work process, and affect the relationship with the employers.

Conclusion

This research demonstrates that there is a level of frustration among insufficiently motivated employees regardless of their gender or type of their organizations, with significant relationship between age and frustration. It is also found that complexity of the conflict is influenced by gender and age.

We conclude from that the importance of motivation in satisfying employees. In addition, incentives assist in improving the performance of employees and play role in keeping remaining the employees in organizations. This is very important, especially in the current time where globalization has created many options for employees and job seekers. This

requires organizations to create a motivating and attractive environment. Many successful organizations give consideration to their employees, as they primarily depend on human resources.

It is also important that organizations design conflict resolution systems in order to manage conflicts. As shown in this research, frustrated employees tend to conflict with their employers, and some of those conflicts are complicated. Conflict resolution system creates the means and mechanisms for peacefully controlling conflicts regardless of the causes of conflicts. Costantino and Merchant (1996) stress the significance of including conflict resolution systems in organizations to identify the causes of conflict and create solutions.

Practical Implications

This research has significant implications on human resource management in Saudi organizations. It assists in understanding the behaviors and reactions of insufficiently motivated employees toward frustration and conflict, through focusing on the influence of essential demographic variables: gender, organization type, and age. The more managers understand behaviors of employees and differences between them, the more they can deal with them effectively. Knights and Willmott (2007) stress the significance of understanding individual differences among employees for human resource practices in organizations. Furthermore, the process of conflict resolution requires an understanding of individual differences among parties of conflict. Parties may use different tactics and strategies in conflicts due to their behavioral differences. Wilmot and Hocker (2007) explain that conflict management requires primarily understanding of behaviors of individuals, not to mention factors influencing their behaviors.

Limitation and Future Research

This research focuses on private and public organizations without identifying their fields (e.g., education, industry, commerce, etc.). It is more beneficial to identify the differences between reactions of employees in these fields toward frustration and conflict with the employer. In addition, frustration was measured through focusing on insufficiently obtained external motivation (financial and non-financial rewards). Yet, the influence could be moderated by internal motivation of employees. When an employee has internal motivation, his frustration and tendency to conflict with his employer,

in case of absence of external incentives, may decrease. The literature shows the significant effect of internal motivation (e.g., feeling responsible, enjoying working, accomplishment) on employees in terms of performance, loyalty, and so on. Therefore, it is important to conduct future studies to measure the role of internal motivation in moderating the relationship of each of gender, organization type, and age with frustration and conflict with the employer.

Survey

Dear participant:

This survey examines the influence of gender, organization type, and age on frustration, conflict with the employer, and complexity of the conflict among insufficiently motivated employees. The survey measures these variables through 13 questions. Precision in answering the survey leads to accurate results. Writing Names or IDs are not required in this survey.

1- Gender:

Male

Female

2- Age:

3- Type of Organization:

Private

Public

4- Have you been in situations where you feel that you have not obtained sufficient incentives that you deserve?

A- Yes B- No

If Yes, please answer the following questions from 5- 13

5- Specify those incentives:

A- Financial (e.g., salaries, bonus)

B- Non-financial (appreciation of work, chance of development, participation in making decisions)

C- Both: financial and non-financial

6- Have you felt unsatisfied regarding the lack of incentives?

- A- Never
- B- Rarely
- C- Sometimes
- D- Often
- E- Always

7- Has it generated, in your mind, resentment toward your employer due to the lack of incentives?

- A- Never
- B- Rarely
- C- Sometimes
- D- Often
- E- Always

8- To what extent have your feelings affected your desire to work and being productive?

- A- Never
- B- Rarely
- C- Sometimes
- D- Often
- E- Always

9- Have you thought about moving to another organization due to the lack of incentives?

- A- Never
- B- Rarely
- C- Sometimes
- D- Often
- E- Always

10- Has the issue of the lack of incentives escalated into a real confrontation between you and your organization?

- A- Never
- B- Rarely
- C- Sometimes
- D- Often
- E- Always

11- Has the confrontation continued for a long time?

- A- Never
- B- Rarely
- C- Sometimes
- D- Often
- E- Always

12- Has the confrontation affected the relationship between you and your organization?

- A- Never
- B- Rarely
- C- Sometimes
- D- Often
- E- Always

13- Has the confrontation developed to a degree that it has affected the work process?

- A- Never
- B- Rarely
- C- Sometimes
- D- Often
- E- Always

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